

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed January 25, 2006 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. Claims 4, 8 and 13 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 7, 10, 12 and 20 are amended. Claims 1-3, 5-7, 9-12 and 14-27 are now pending and submitted for reconsideration.

The objection to claims 4 and 13 is now moot due to the cancellation of these claims.

All of the claims were rejected over the prior art. In view of the amendments set forth above, the rejections should be withdrawn. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 7, 12 and 20 are independent claims.

Claim 1 calls for a guide mechanism for a curtain airbag. The guide mechanism includes a pillar garnish "wherein longitudinal edges of the pillar garnish remain stationary during deployment of the curtain airbag."

Claim 7 calls for a guide mechanism "wherein the guide member and pillar garnish are configured to be mounted to the pillar so that said longitudinal end of the airbag is movable along the guide member without either the airbag or the pillar garnish being bent during deployment of the airbag."

Claim 12 calls for a curtain airbag system "wherein the guide member is positioned so that the end of the curtain airbag does not rub against the pillar garnish when the airbag deploys downwardly."

Claim 20 calls for a curtain airbag system "wherein the pillar garnish and guide member are arranged so that the pillar garnish is not deformed by the downwardly deploying airbag."

The Examiner relies primarily upon U.S. Patent No. 6,866,293 (Ogata) and U.S. Patent No. 6,783,152 (Tanase et al.). As explained further below, neither Ogata nor Tanase disclose, teach or suggest all of the elements of the claimed invention.

Ogata discloses an airbag device that includes a pillar garnish 9 with a front edge 9b and a hinge portion 9c that allows the front edge 9b to deform, bend, move or open during deployment of an airbag. See Ogata at col. 7, line 56, to col. 8, line 57. Furthermore, Ogata clearly discloses that there is contact (i.e., rubbing) between the airbag and the pillar garnish (see Fig. 3, ref. nos. 38 and 9b). Thus, the rejections based on Ogata should be withdrawn because Ogata fails to disclose all of the features of claims 1, 7, 12 and 20. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Tanase et al. discloses an airbag device in which a rear pillar garnish 109 covers a guide member 141, wherein the rear pillar garnish 109 opens during deployment of the airbag, permitting the guide member 141 to move to the exterior of the rear pillar garnish 109. See Tanase et al. at col. 20, lines 34-55, and Figure 17. In Tanase et al., the pillar garnish 109 bends, moves and deforms during airbag deployment. As shown in Fig. 17, Tanase et al. discloses that the airbag 116 rubs against the rear pillar garnish 109 as the airbag 116 expands during deployment. (Tanase et al. at col. 20, lines 62-67). Thus, the rejections based on Tanase et al. should be withdrawn because Tanase et al. fails to disclose all of the features of claims 1, 7, 12, and 20. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Examiner also relies on U.S. Patent No. 5,462,308 (hereafter "Seki et al.") for the rejection of certain claims. Seki et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Ogata and Tanase et al. (described above) and cannot be relied upon to reject the claims of the present application.


Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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